

FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale Module

Instructions for the DHS-8 Interviewer's Manual

[M.] Section []: Food Insecurity Experience Scale

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), developed by FAO, is a household food insecurity measure that calculates moderate and severe food insecurity.

The FIES Module is composed of 8 questions, that ask respondents to self-report on their ability to access food of sufficient quantity and quality. The questions collect information on respondents' experience with food insecurity on behalf of their household. Each question focuses on a lack of money or resources to obtain food. Resources refer to non-monetary means the household use to get food such as

- own production
- sale of small livestock
- bartering or trading
- fishing, hunting, or gathering
- food donations from family, community, government or NGOs

For all questions, the respondent is asked to recall the household experiences with food for the last 12 months and respond to each different experience with one of the following response options:

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Refused to answer

Since the FIES questions are based on the household, if the household respondent is not able to respond to a question, the respondent can also ask other household members who are knowledgeable on the topic.

With the nature of the questions, some respondents may feel shame or embarrassment and may be reluctant to respond to the questions. Therefore, it is important for the interviewer to build rapport with the respondent, to listen in a sympathetic, non-judgmental way, and ask all questions with care.

FIES questions are about the respondent's own understanding and experiences with food insecurity. That means we document the respondent's own opinion. It is important for interviewers to

- Read every question as it is written
- Avoid making up their own interpretation of the questions for the respondent
- Avoid prompting for answers

Q. [FS01]

The question refers to a state of being worried, anxious, apprehensive, afraid or concerned that there might not be enough food or that food will run out of food (because there is not enough money or other resources to get food).

The worry or anxiety is due to circumstances affecting their ability to procure food, such as:

- loss of employment
- insufficient food production for own consumption
- insufficient food available for hunting and gathering
- disrupted social relationships

- loss of customary benefits or food assistance
- environmental or political crises

The respondent does not necessarily need to have experienced not having enough food or running out of food since this question aims to understand their emotions about this issue.

Q. [FS02]

This question asks the respondent whether they were not able to get foods they considered healthy or good for them (because there was not enough money or other resources to get food.)

The respondent answers based on their own opinion of what *they* consider to be healthy and nutritious food.

This question refers to the respondent's viewpoint on the quality of the household's diet and not the quantity of foods consumed.

Q. [FS03]

The question asks if the respondent was forced to eat a limited variety of foods, the same foods, or just a few kinds of foods every day (because there was not enough money or other resources to get food).

The reason for eating a few kinds of foods is based on a lack of money or resources and NOT customary practices, religious reasons like fasting, or health factors.

This question refers to the quality of the diet and not the quantity of foods consumed.

Q. [FS04]

This question asks about the experience of having to miss or skip a major meal (for example, breakfast, lunch or dinner depending on the norm for number and times of meals in the culture) that would normally have been eaten (because there was not enough money or other resources to get food.)

This question refers to an insufficient quantity of food.

Q. [FS05]

This question asks about eating less than what the respondent considered they should, even if they did not skip a meal (because the household did not have money or other resources to get food).

The respondent answers based on their own opinion of how much they think *they* should be eating. The question is NOT about special diets to lose weight, or religious or health reasons.

This question refers to quantity of foods eaten and not the quality of the diet.

Q. [FS06]

This question refers to any experiences when there was actually no food in the household because they did not have money or other resources to get food.

Q. [FS07]

This question asks about the physical experience of feeling hungry, and specifically, feeling hungry and not being able to eat enough (because of a lack of money or resources to get enough food).

Hunger is an uncomfortable or painful feeling caused by not eating enough food. The question does NOT refer to feeling hungry because of special diets for health reasons, to lose weight, fasting or other religious reasons.

Q. [FS08]

This question asks the respondent about a specific behavior, not eating anything all day—that is not eating any foods at all (because of a lack of money or resources). The question does NOT refer to special diets to lose weight, or for religious fasts or other reasons, or for health reasons.

END of FAO FIES Module Interviewer Instructions.